

September 21, 2015

Dear School Funding Interim Commission Members-

Fourteen years ago, neonatologists told me my daughter would be stillborn. She was diagnosed prenatally with a rare chromosome difference that was incompatible with life. I was heartbroken when I considered burying my unborn baby. Now, I seldom consider her mortality. She is a ray of sunshine on the darkest days, and lately we have seen a few.

Two weeks ago, my husband was upland bird hunting on Labor Day. He had a heart attack at 43 years young, and testing revealed severe coronary artery disease. He had open heart surgery and the surgeon rerouted blood flow to his heart via five bypasses. Now, I often consider my mortality.

My husband and I may not outlive our daughter. School funding for special education is crucial and extending the graduation age to 21 for students with intellectual disabilities is paramount. Quality special education programming with a strong transition component for 18-21 year old students will support my daughter in living the most independent life she is capable of. As I look at the fresh scar on my husband's chest, I realize it is naïve and foolish to think that we can support our daughter's future endeavors all on our own. We need your support, too.

Thank you for your consideration.

Truly,

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